

The background of the image features a marbled paper pattern with a complex, organic design. It consists of large, irregular shapes in shades of brown, tan, and beige, separated by thin, winding veins of blue and white. In some areas, there are also small patches of red and purple. The overall effect is reminiscent of stone or bark texture.

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THE

LITTLE BEGGARS.

BY MRS. SHERWOOD,

Author of Little Henry and his Bearer, Hedge of Thorns, &c.



See p. 8.

STEREOTYPED BY JAS. CONNER, NEW-YORK.

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THE LITTLE BEGGARS.

THERE is an old saying, that "honesty is the best policy," a saying full of wisdom, and which is verified by every man's experience. But as little children who have not lived long in the world cannot be supposed to understand the weight of this sentiment, I shall relate in this place a certain story with which I became acquainted some time past when travelling in a foreign country.

There is in Germany a range of lofty hills called the Mountains of Hartz ; many of these hills are covered with woods,—woods which extend for many miles around, and are in some places so thick with underwood and tangled bushes, that it would be almost impossible for a traveller to make his way through them. In the corner of one of these forests, and about half way up one of the highest hills, stand two cottages, built according to the German fashion, of beams of timber painted black, the intervals being filled with laths and plaster, and the roof supplied with a thick and warm covering of thatch. Each of these houses had a porch which projected forward, and afforded a shelter to several benches placed beneath, in which the family might sit in warm weather, and take their meals or pursue their work.

The smaller of these cottages stood somewhat out from among the trees, and near a spring of fresh and sparkling water, which poured down from the

heights above, and failed not in the hottest season to supply the inhabitants of the wood with that refreshment which is most desirable at such periods. The larger cottage was, however, more deeply embosomed in the wood, insomuch so that its white walls and black timbers were hardly discoverable from the little path, along which was the ordinary passage from the nearest village to the highest regions of the hills. About sixty years ago, these cottages were inhabited by two families, one of which, being pious, was as remarkable for its decency, order, and honesty, as the other was for the contrary.

The names of persons in Germany are so different from ours in England, that it might perplex you were I to give them at full length; I shall therefore content myself by calling the father of the pious family Wilhelm, and his wife Anna, and giving the name of Hugo and Ursula to the man and woman who lived in their neighbourhood. It was in the cottage without the wood in which Wilhelm and his family lived; and this light and pleasant dwelling, where the sound of rushing waters, and the songs of the many birds who came to allay their thirst at the flowing brook, supplied a perpetual feast to the ear, was no doubt more suitable to them than the dark and gloomy cottage which had fallen to the lot of Hugo, in which many nameless deeds might be done, unmarked by any other eye than that of him of whom it is said, “Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.” Ps. cxxxix. 12.

And now, because I do not mean to say much of old Hugo and his wife Ursula, I shall content myself with observing, that nobody knew how the man

procured his living, though most people supposed that it was by stealing, or some other dishonest means ; whilst Ursula, at the time of which I am speaking, chiefly employed herself in going about the country, dressed in an old petticoat patched with every variety of rags, a gray cloak full of slits, a dirty straw hat, and not unseldom carrying her little daughter, about four years of age, upon her back ; whilst her son, who was as much as six years older than his sister, ran by her side without shoes or stockings, and scarcely covered from the heat of the sun in summer, or the cold in winter, by the wretched rags which hung from his shoulders.

When Ursula set out in this way, she often did not return for several days, during which time the cottage was commonly shut up ; and what she got by these journeys it was not easy to say, for no one went into her house ; and whatever her gains might be, she never laid aside her ragged petticoat, or supplied her children with decent garments of any kind.

And now, having given you an account of the manner of life of this miserable family, or at least told you all that was known of it by the neighbours, I shall turn to more agreeable matters, and we will take a view of Wilhelm in his pleasant cottage, with his good wife and three neat and pious little children.

Wilhelm was a day labourer, and though he earned but little, yet he brought all he got to his wife, who put every thing to the best advantage, and endeavoured as much as possible to add to her husband's gains by her own little exertions—by cultivating with the help of her children the small garden which was joined to the house—by gathering wood for their use in the forest, and by spinning and knitting her husband's stockings, and other lit-

tle contrivances, of which a careful woman knows so well how to avail herself.

There are many persons in Germany who have very wrong notions of the religion of Christ, and who, departing from the appointed means of addressing God the Father in prayer through Christ, use the mediation of the Virgin Mary and of the Saints. And close by the cottage of Wilhelm, under the shade of a wide spreading elm, there was actually a little chapel, where through an iron grate might be seen a figure of the Virgin, of stone, and four angels of the same materials kneeling round as in the act of prayer. Wilhelm, however, never went near this chapel, but every Sabbath day accompanied his wife and children to a place of worship in the village, which was but an English mile from his house ; in which place this little family enjoyed the privilege of hearing the true word of the Lord from a faithful Minister of the reformed church, that is, of the church which, having renounced all false worship, has adopted that perfect faith which is alone derived from the Bible.

The remainder of the Sabbath was spent by Wilhelm in instructing his children in the things of the Lord ; and as this had been his practice from their earliest infancy, at the time when Albert, his eldest son, was twelve years of age, and his daughter Emma in her eleventh year, he not only enjoyed the pleasure of seeing them capable of reading the word of God, but of knowing that they were well acquainted with many passages in this Holy Book, whereby he trusted that, with the Divine blessing, they would be rendered wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Neither had this excellent father less delight in his youngest child, little George, who, though scarcely five years of age,

could repeat many hymns, and nearly the whole of the Catechism of the ancient Waldenses, of which his father had a copy, and which was called by excellence *the Noble Lesson*. Well would it be for poor labouring men in this country if they would follow the example of this obscure German; for although those are highly to be commended who, not being themselves able to instruct their children on the Sabbath, are diligent and careful in sending them to a place of instruction, yet those do better who devote their own time to this precious work, who employ all their leisure on this holy day in teaching their children the blessed word of God, and who continually lead the uncertain steps of their tender little ones towards the house of prayer.

It may be supposed that these excellent parents did not allow their young ones to associate much with Stephen and Margot, the children of their neighbour Hugo ; nevertheless, they could not be prevented from sometimes meeting them in the forest, and interchanging a few words with them.

It happened one day in the spring of the year, that Wilhelm being at work, and his wife gone to the village, where she expected to be detained till evening, their three children, who were left alone, having smothered the glowing embers on the hearth with ashes, and locked the door of the house, went out into the wood to gather sticks, which they formed into bundles and placed together in heaps, till their father should be at liberty to bring them home in his barrow.

The privilege of supplying themselves with fuel from the forest was allowed them by the lord of the manor, and they were therefore innocently employed in endeavouring to collect it ; their mother had promised to give each of them a cake of white

bread on her return if she found that they had worked well, and being encouraged by this prospect, and the wish of pleasing their dear parent, they laboured hard till noon, when being somewhat tired they sat down on a mossy bank under the trees, and took the dinner which their mother had prepared for them, from a napkin in which she had folded it. It consisted of coarse brown bread, on which a few curds were spread, and this very plain and ordinary fare was sweetened to the little children by their previous labour and humble habits.

Whilst these little people of the wood were thus enjoying their pleasant repast, and were watching, as they sat at ease on their mossy couch, two or three beautiful butterflies who were playing among the flowers at their feet, suddenly they heard a foot-step, and in a few minutes Ursula appeared coming towards them from the interior of the forest.

Her tall, thin, and upright figure, first showed itself where the branches of the trees formed a kind of archway, or long shadowy passage, which wound away into the depths of the wood. She wore as usual her petticoat of many colours and her gray cloak, but her straw hat hung behind her head, being fastened in that situation by the strings which were tied under her chin, and on her head she had a large bundle closely fastened up, which appeared to be heavy. She came forward, turning neither to the right nor left, with a steady even step ; and when she entered into the more open part of the wood, and near the little family of Wilhelm, they perceived that she was followed by Stephen and Margot, padding after her without shoes or stockings, and finding it difficult with their short and quick steps to keep pace with the apparent slow yet regular progress of their mother.

The children of Wilhelm had always entertained an extreme dread of Ursula ; they therefore, as she came on, drew closer to each other, and little George contrived to insert himself between his elder brother and sister, as in the place of the greatest security in the absence of his mother ; but Ursula came on, and was for a moment in a direct line with the affrighted children, and then passed forward to her own house, without giving any other indication of her having seen her little neighbours than a slight motion of contempt, which agitated her upper lip and the lower part of her nostrils, at the moment of her being nearest to them. But though Ursula did not think it worth her while to take the slightest notice of the little company as she passed, it was not so with Stephen ; for when he came up to the children he stood quite still, and having looked at them for a moment, he exclaimed, in a contemptuous tone, “Bread and sour curds !” concluding with a loud laugh.

“Well,” said Albert, flushing with indignation “and what then,—what can be better?” “Pasty,” (re turned Stephen, in a provoking tone,) “boar hams, and larded pullets.” “What are those ?” said Albert. “They are what you know nothing about,” replied Stephen laughing ; “folks who stay always at home shut up in a wood and reading good books, seldom know much of such things,” and he laughed again in a manner very provoking to Albert, and was joined in his laugh by his little sister, who held him by the hand. This little girl might have been counted a lovely child had she not been ragged and sun-burnt, and her head and part of her face covered with a quantity of uncombed hair, which being naturally crisp and inclined to curl, stood up above her small features like the feathers of the hooded owl ;

added to which, the total neglect of her education having left her without an idea of her God or her duty, her face was in consequence wholly without meaning excepting when she was pleased, and then she suddenly passed from extreme gravity to a loud laugh, often accompanying her laughter with a jumping motion, which at this time greatly increased the displeasure of Albert, who was naturally of a hot temper, although this temper had been much corrected by judicious management of his parents, who had not unseldom laid before him the sinfulness of yielding to angry passions ; for it is written in the Holy Scriptures, “Cease from anger and forsake wrath, fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.” Psal. xxxvii. 8.

However, this day, when he heard the mocks and taunts of Stephen, and saw the wild grimaces of Margot, he broke out into a violent fit of anger, and had taken up a stick, intending to strike Stephen, had not his sister held his arm, using all the force she possessed, and at the same time saying, “For shame, brother, what would our mother say if she were to see you ?”

“ Oh, don’t hold him back,” said Stephen, “ I wish he would strike me, and then I would let him know that I am as good as he is, though I am not dressed so like a gentleman ;” and then, laughing and putting his hands to his sides, “ but I am as well fed as he any how,” he added, “ thanks to these rags which he despises so much, and the wry faces and dismal looks which I can put on when I have a mind.”

“ Oh, Stephen,” replied Emma, whilst she drew her brother down upon the grass by her side, and still held his arm, “ how can you boast of that which ought to be your shame ?”

"Shame," repeated Stephen, "shame, what do you mean?"

"Why," returned Emma, "of the life you lead, going about the country as you do, and pretending those things which are not true."

"What things?" asked Stephen.

"Going about begging, and stealing," added Albert, "you know very well what Emma means, only you pretend not; but tell me, I say, are not you just returned from one of your begging journeys? and if you have not been stealing as well as begging, it is only because nothing has come in your way which you could get at without being found out."

"For shame, brother," said Emma, "what right have we to call our neighbours thieves?"

"Well," said Albert, "I will not call them thieves, if that offends you, but I suppose they won't deny that they are beggars."

"No, to be sure we will not," replied Stephen, "we are beggars, and we glory in it; it's the best trade poor folks can follow; beggars are not obliged to dine on brown bread and sour sauce," and again he laughed, and was again joined by his little sister.

On which Albert's indignation rose, and I know not what angry words he might have used, if Emma had not put her hand over his mouth.

"Let him alone, let him alone," said Stephen, "he is only spiteful because he knows what rare lives we beggars lead, and how well we fare; we have many a feast, which you hard working pious folks never taste;" and with that he drew from a bag which hung among the rags on his breast a piece of cheese and a cake of the whitest bread.

"Where did you get that?" said Albert.

"Oh, where did I get this," returned Stephen, "where, how, when! not by stopping at home, not by picking sticks. I got it by going from home, by making wry faces, and telling dismal stories, by limping on one leg, and putting my finger in my eye, and talking of being famished, and saying I had no father or mother, and that little sister and I had not a friend in the world; and I told this long story to some little master who was going to school, so he pulled his satchel from his back and gave me his dinner, and I put it into my satchel, and it will serve me for supper: but I fear little master will be more hungry before night than I shall be, for mother has got something more relishing than this for dinner, has not she, little one? but this reminds me that we must not stand here talking." So nodding familiarly at Albert he ran off, his little sister padding after him.

Stephen and Margot had scarcely turned their backs on Wilhelm's children before Albert gave free vent to his anger, neither sparing the words beggar, thief, or liar; and wishing that his sister had not prevented him from giving Stephen such a beating as he deserved.

"And now," added the angry boy, "he is gone to his house to feed on his ill gotten goods,—look where the chimney of old Hugo's cottage rises up among the trees, just beside yonder oak. Look now how the smoke curls thick from the mouth,—there are rare doings, no doubt, now round yonder hearth."

"Albert," said Emma, "now do not be so chafed and fretted as you are about these poor people, remember the words which our father taught us last

Lord's day, 'Fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they soon shall be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.' Psalm xxxvii. 1, 2.

"And as to those poor children, my heart aches for them; think what a father and mother they have, think how miserable we should be if Hugo and Ursula were our parents, instead of those we have; or only suppose that poor little George had been born the child of Ursula instead of our mother."

"Oh!" said George, "I would not have had her for my mother, I am sure I would not—her face frightens me whenever I look at it, and I would almost as soon meet a wolf in the wood."

"Well then," returned Emma, "you ought to be sorry for little Margot, and to pity her, and to pray that God would take care of her, and not to look angry at her as you did but now; for there is one thing, Albert," added she, turning to her elder brother, "which we ought to remember, that is, that we are all naturally sinful; there is none that doeth good, no not one; and that if we do not go about begging and telling lies, as Hugo's children do, it is because our father and mother have brought us up in another way,—and it is God who has given us these parents; so we owe it all to God that we are not like Stephen and Margot, and we ought to thank God, instead of being unkind to them."

"I know that you are right, Emma," said Albert, "quite right, and that I am wrong; but I hate beggars and thieves, and that little jumping, grinning thing provokes me so much."

The tears came into Emma's eyes when Albert spoke these words, but she did not answer.

"Why are the tears in your eyes, Emma?" said Albert, tenderly.

"I don't know," replied Emma, "but I don't like you to speak unkindly of Margot. I remember her when she was a little baby, and she was very pretty then,—I once took care of her for several days when her mother was sick, and fed her with the milk of our goat."

"Then I won't speak another unkind word about her," said Albert, rubbing his sleeve across his eyes, "and I won't say that I hate beggars and thieves, but that I hate begging and stealing, because you know father told us, that the Lord Jesus Christ hates sin, but loves the sinner. And now, George," he said, "now for our work."

Emma, Albert, and George, then went to work again. Albert was furnished with a quantity of small cord, which his father had cut into proper lengths, and Albert's way was to spread one of these pieces of cord on the ground, and then with his brother and sister's help he soon gathered together as many sticks as the cord would bind up, and when they were thus fastened, the bundles of sticks were carried to the heap ready to be brought home. Albert had just finished one of these bundles, and was carrying it to his heap, when Stephen and Margot came out from the cottage to look for wood, exclaiming in some distress, "that their father was just come in, and was in great haste for his dinner, and there was no wood gathered to keep up the fire." The complaints of Stephen were not intended to be heard by Albert, but he did hear them, and remembering what his sister had just said to him, he took up the bundle of sticks which he had last thrown down, and making his way through the bushes to Stephen, he begged him to accept of it.

"And can't I gather sticks myself?" said Stephen, who did not at first seem to be able to conceive how Albert could intend him this kindness.

"Yes," said Albert, "but are not you in a hurry?"

"To be sure I am," said Stephen, brightening up, "for when father comes home we must all run, mother and all, therefore I take this kindly of you, Albert, and shall be glad to do you a good turn when it is in my power."

Stephen then took the sticks and ran back to the cottage, whilst Wilhelm's children went back to their work.

In the evening, when Anna returned from the village, her children gave her an account of all that had passed during the day, and Albert was commended for his kindness respecting the sticks ; "who knows," said she, "but that by showing affection to these poor children, you may be the means of making them understand that religion is a most beautiful and desirable thing, and that which renders little children more happy and amiable than all other things beside ; dishonest ways, my dear children, may seem to prosper for a time, and persons who live by begging and stealing may sometimes possess some things which poor honest people cannot procure ; but these are the words of scripture, Jeremiah xvii. 10, 11,—'I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.' 'As the partridge sitteth on eggs and hatcheth them not, so he that getteth riches and not by right, shall leave them in the middle of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.' And again, Psalm xi. 3, 4, —'The integrity of the upright shall guide them, but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them ; and riches profit not in the day of wrath,

but righteousness delivereth from death.' Therefore he who wishes to do well for his family, will take care that they shall never be fed by the wages of iniquity."

Before the family of Wilhelm had closed their doors for the night, Stephen and his little sister appeared peeping in at a window of green glass, whose small panes gave light to an inner room where was Albert's bed. Albert, who was undressing himself, saw them jumping and hopping before the window, but he did not choose to speak to them, because he knew his parents did not wish them to be encouraged to come about the house ; however, he asked his mother to go out to them, and she presently returned with a large bunch of early flowers, and a few wild strawberries, which the poor little beggars desired might be divided among the children.

" And in return for which," said Albert's mother, " let us remember to pray for them whenever we kneel down to address our Maker."

The next morning, when Wilhelm went out to bring in the wood which his children had collected the day before, he saw that Hugo's door was shut, and the windows closed, neither was there any smoke rising from the chimney ; and from that time till many months had passed away, nothing more was heard of Hugo and his family.

The little beggars were still however remembered in the daily prayers of Wilhelm and his family. And the nosegay was still recollected, long after the flowers of which it was composed had faded into dust.

Now it was so common a thing for Hugo's family all to be out for several days, and even weeks, in fine seasons, that Wilhelm and his wife, when they first missed them, felt no concern about them ; but

when week went on after week, and month after month, they began to be troubled about them, and though they had always been bad neighbours, to feel some anxiety lest they should come to any evil.

And now, as the wonder of their long absence became daily greater, Anna took occasion one day, when business called her to the market in the village, to make some inquiries respecting her lost neighbours, from such persons as she thought most likely to give her satisfaction.

"Good woman," said one, to whom she put the question, to wit, if he knew aught of the family of Hugo, "you are inquiring after those who are not worth the trouble;—as to old Hugo, we know little of him, but he herds, no doubt, with the worst of people; nevertheless, as he goes farther a-field than his wife, his exploits are less public, at least in this place, than her's. But beggary and deception are the whole business of the woman, and she carried on her trade hereabouts with no small success till her name became notorious, and the sight of her ragged cloak and patched petticoat was enough to drive out charity from every heart. On which, when she found herself detected every where, she took to send her little ones in her place, putting hem upon such tricks as could hardly be conceived by any honest person. Thus for a while she prospered through this new device, but even this must needs grow stale after a while; and no doubt she has found it so, and is gone to some other country, where she may practise all her old tricks over again."

Such was the answer which Anna got from one; and another, to whom she put the same question, made her a reply much to the same purpose; and so on to a third, and a fourth: till at length being ashamed of seeming to care for such disreputable

persons, she returned home as ignorant as she went out.

Thus passed the summer, whilst Albert, and Emma, and little George, grew and flourished, and became every day greater comforts to their parents. It is true, that their clothes were coarse, but they were whole and clean ; their food was of an ordinary kind, but it was plentiful and wholesome ; and if they worked hard, their sleep was refreshing, and they awoke in the morning healthy and refreshed. In the mean time, the flowers of spring had given way to those of summer, and those of summer to the more gaudy flowers of autumn ; the blossoms in the orchards had become fruit, and the fruit was housed and gathered ; the fields had become white with harvest, and the corn had been stored up ; but still no one opened the door of Hugo's house, or lighted the fire upon the hearth.

"I should like to see Stephen again," said Albert, one day, to Emma, "and that little jumping thing by his side. Poor Stephen ! I wonder what is become of him."

"Ah, you may well say poor Stephen," said Albert's mother, "he is an unfortunate little boy. I have known his mother long ; I am less acquainted with his father. We were both young women when we were married and became neighbours, and at that time she often used to come into our house, and talk to me as I sat at work : but her principles then were very bad ; she had no fear of God, and used to speak with disrespect of the laws of her country. She also hated work ; and though she loved the good things which can only be procured in a creditable way by the labour of the hand by such poor people as we are, yet she would have it that she could get much more by going about the country and tell-

ing lamentable tales to excite people's pity, than by honest and regular labour. In vain did I try to persuade her that she was taking the wrong way, and that she would in the end be made to feel the consequence of these evil practices ; and in vain did your good father read to her what is said on these subjects in the Holy Scriptures. Poor Ursula was not one who heeded the Bible, for she was a papist, and believed that the priest had power to absolve her from all her sins. So after a while we ceased to argue with her, or indeed to hold discourse with her on any other subject ; for when we found that she was quite hardened in her evil ways, and began to be talked of about the country, it became dangerous for us to have any connexion with the family, or to be seen within the doors of the house. Nevertheless, there is one duty which we may perform for these poor people, and that is, we may remember them in our prayers, and that I trust we shall not neglect."

The good mother then went on to point out to her children that they were by nature no better than Hugo and his family ; and on this occasion she failed not to speak to them of the natural depravity of the heart of man, and to show that when one man was made to differ in any respect from another, it was merely the effect of the free grace of God, and not of his own endeavours. And then, taking *the Noble Lesson* as her pattern, she laid before her children a short outline of the scheme of salvation by Christ. She first spoke of the nature and power of God, and pointed out that in the unity of God there are three persons, namely, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Showing how these divine persons are equally and distinctly engaged in the restoration of the sinner

to holiness and happiness ; endeavouring as much as in her lay, to make them sensible that all those spiritual blessings, whereby one sinful creature is made in any degree superior to another, are received wholly and entirely through the favour of the Almighty, as the Apostle speaks to the children of God, in Ephesians ii. 8—10.

In this manner Anna conversed with her children on the occasion above described, and no doubt, whenever mention was made of the lost family, all her discourse tended in the same degree to lead them to distinguish and shun their faults, without encouraging in them any feelings of hatred and dislike.

It was not many days after this conversation that an old pedlar, a very decent man, who had been accustomed to travel the country for many years, called at the cottage of Wilhelm, to beg a night's lodging for himself, and a corner of the cottage for his pack.

Few years had passed since Wilhelm and his wife had inhabited the cottage in the wood, in which this poor man had failed to make them a visit, being sure of a hearty welcome, and the best refreshment which the house could afford.

It was always a day of joy to the children when this visitor appeared, not only because he commonly presented each of them with some trifle from his stores, but because he had many curious adventures to relate, such as children love to hear, and such as travellers are accustomed to encounter.

At this time it was to be expected that the discourse should run upon the extraordinary mystery which hung upon the family of Hugo, which, Anna informed the old man, had not been heard of in the neighbourhood for many months.

“ Say you so ? ” said the pedlar, “ then I can give

you some tidings of them. Hugo himself will scarcely be seen again in this part of the world, for I have reason to think he has found it necessary to take himself beyond the reach of those who would have taken cognizance of his vile actions :— and as to Ursula, I am much mistaken if I did not see her about two months ago, sitting under a hedge by the way side, near a village as much as forty miles from this place : what business had brought her so far I know not, but she looked miserably sickly, and covered with rags, and two unhappy children were seated by her side. She was, no doubt, still following her old mode of life, begging, stealing, and telling fortunes, sometimes being full of money, and sometimes without a penny ; sometimes living in riot and drunkenness, and sometimes enduring long and severe abstinence ; not considering that the little gains which she may have to boast of will all melt away as waters which run continually ; whilst the afflictions of the lot which she has chosen will become permanent.”

Wilhelm and Anna were much troubled by the account which the pedlar gave of their former neighbours, being particularly uneasy about the children ; and the next morning when Anna opened the door of her house, and looked towards the empty cottage, before which the weeds, grass, and dried leaves, had covered the path-way, she could not help sighing, and thinking how often she had seen little Stephen and Margot playing in that place ;—“and what now,” said she to herself, “is the situation of these poor children ?” Albert and Emma too, often spoke of them, and Albert wished that Stephen might come back, in order that he might show him some token of kindness, in return for his nosegay. But autumn advanced, the vintage was gathered

in, the last load of corn was housed in the barns, and the forest assumed a variety of beautiful colours; brown, and red, and yellow leaves hung on every tree, and the brakes were filled with clusters of red berries. At length the shrivelled leaves fell from the branches of the forest, and the yew, the holly, and the pine, became remarkable among the leafless shafts of the surrounding trees.

Albert and Emma had almost ceased to say, "we wonder why Stephen and Margot don't come back," for they had left off expecting them; but they frequently exclaimed, "poor Stephen, poor Margot, where are they now? we hope they are not cold."

At length, one morning, when Wilhelm's family arose, they observed that all the summits of the mountains which were visible were covered with snow, which had fallen in the night; and the next day the snow began to fall in the lower regions, whilst a cold wind blew from the north, and drifted it as it fell in heaps against the northern sides of the houses, the trees, the hedges, and the banks. The snow continued to fall for several days; when it ceased, a sharp frost ensued, which lasted for many weeks. In the mean time, heavy clouds and mists darkened the air, and the sun did not appear. At this time those poor persons, who were not provided with a comfortable house and warm clothing, suffered severely; but through the goodness of God, Wilhelm was supplied with thrashing and other work, which need not be interrupted by the frost; and Anna and her children were well provided with spinning and other employment which could be pursued under cover. They had also abundance of potatoes, of peas, and carrots, to make soup, and salt pork to relish their vegetables, with many other comforts not needful to enumerate, but for which

they were filled with thankfulness to the mighty Giver of all good things.

"I wish poor little Margot had some of these," said little George, one day whilst his brother was taking the husks off some chesnuts, which he had roasted for him in the ashes; "and Stephen too," said Albert; "poor Stephen," said Emma, "I often think of them, and wish that I had little Margot in my bed at night, when I hear the wind whistle and howl down the valley."

"I wish Ursula would die, or take herself off with her old husband, and that Stephen and Margot would come to live with us," added Albert. "Would it not be better," said his mother, "if, whilst you are wishing, Albert, you were to wish, or rather pray, that it would please God to change the heart of Ursula, and that she might be brought back to her house, and become an honest woman and a good mother?"

Albert made no reply, but little George said, "I should like Margot to live here, if Emma would comb her hair."

"But then, George," said the mother, "you must give her some of your clothes, and divide your soup with her, and have less for yourself; and you must give her half of your chesnuts, and have fewer yourself: poor people like us can only do good by denying ourselves."

"I think," said Albert, "that if God would help me, I could do a great deal for poor Stephen." Emma did not speak, but she had tears in her eyes. This night the wind blew bitter cold, and the snow fell in large flakes; nevertheless, towards morning the wind ceased, and the frost continued: the sky was clear from clouds, and the sun arose above the hills, and showed all the glories of creation. Now,

clothed in a mantle of snow, white, and pure, and sparkling, the trees, even to their smallest branches, were covered with small drops of frozen water, which resembled diamonds ; and where the brook fell over the rocks close to Wilhelm's door, were long icicles hanging from the little projecting points of the stone. Wilhelm's children were delighted to see the sun again, and to be able to open the door of the cottage, without being exposed to the sharp wind, sweeping round from the north.

After they had breakfasted, it being still very early in the morning, their mother bade her two elder children to take a bag and go to a mill, which was about a mile distant in the interior of the forest, in order to get some meal, of which they were in need. " You will find the path beat," said she, " for this is the high way to the mill from the village."

Albert and Emma, who had long been confined to the cottage, were delighted at this proposal, and set off with no small joy to obey their mother's command. They passed by the solitary cottage of Hugo, against the door of which the snow was drifted so high, that the door-way was almost choaked with it ; hence they passed into the more open part of the wood, where they had last met Stephen and Margot, and then entered under the arched walk whence Ursula had issued when last they saw her.

They had passed a little way down this path, when Albert stopped to fasten his shoe, the string of which was broken : this must needs cause a little delay, and whilst he was thus employed, Emma stood by him, and they were both silent : at length Emma spoke ; " how lovely," said she, " do these woods look to day, brother, all covered with watery diamonds, and glittering in the sun with blue, and purple, and gold. They remind me of what

they say of the sparkling gardens of the fairy Morgan ; but one need not go to fairy land to see wonders ;—and hush ! do you not hear the distant sound of the cattle and sheep lowing and bleating down in the village ? and the cocks answering each other from the farm yards ; one—two—three ;—and the last is so far off that he can scarcely be heard !” By this time Albert had put his shoe in order, and jumping up from the ground on which he had been kneeling, he prepared to pursue his walk, at the same time pointing out to his sister other wonders of the wood which we will not stop to enumerate. Thus hand in hand they walked on till they came to a part of the wood where four ways met, in the centre of which, on the top of a small mound, was a wooden cross, and behind it a place where a little rock, covered with creepers, hanging over the road, was calculated to afford some small shelter from the wind and snow. The path which the children had passed had hitherto been tolerably easy, being sheltered by the trees to the north ; but in this place the snow had drifted high against the mound, and the road was so much obstructed, that Emma and Albert were brought to a stand.

“ Our mother told us not to go on if we found any difficulty,” said Emma.

“ True,” replied Albert, “ but what will she do without the meal ? At any rate, let us try to get round the mound, and if we find the road deep beyond it we will return ;” so saying, he gave his hand to Emma, and tried to get her round the mound towards the east, in which direction their road lay ; and having first tried the north side, which was impassable, he attempted the south side, but found nearly the same difficulty. However, not liking to give up the adventure, he directed Emma to stand

still where she was, whilst he climbed to the top of the little hillock, which he did not effect without falling back several times. At length, however, taking a violent spring, he obtained hold of the cross, and there held himself on the summit of the little ascent, whilst he looked forward towards the road which he desired to travel : suddenly, however, as he stood, he uttered a loud cry, and the next moment he sprung down from the cross, and was hid from his sister by the mound ; and though she called to him, and she still heard his voice, she could not distinguish a word he said.

Emma now, in the greatest terror, attempted to climb the mound, but although she was scarcely less active than Albert, she could not succeed ; still, however, she heard the voice of Albert, and waiting another minute she saw him coming towards her, not over the mound, but round the southern side of it, using efforts which might have been thought beyond the power of a boy of his age. In his arms he carried some heavy weight ; but what with the difficulty of stepping through the snow, and the weight he carried, he seemed unable to speak, and his face, even to his very forehead, was flushed with heat. He came near to Emma, who advanced to meet him as far as she could, but he called to her to keep back, directing her to sit down on the stump of a tree which was near at hand, and before she had time to ascertain what he carried in his arms, he had laid little Margot on her lap, wrapped in the well known ragged coat which belonged to poor Stephen, but so cold, so pale, so still, that Emma, screaming with horror, cried out, "she is dead, quite dead. Oh, poor little Margot!" "No, no," said Albert, "not dead, not dead, I hope. Run, run, Emma ; take her home, lay her in my mother's

arms, and come back as fast as you can, and bring a blanket for Stephen. No, no, (he added,) don't do so, stay with Margot, and send my mother to help me with Stephen ; don't stay to kiss her, but wrap her in your petticoat, and run with her home." "But oh, Albert," said the weeping Emma, "she is dead ; her lips are cold, cold as snow ; she does not breathe." "No, no," said Albert, "she is not dead ;" then, raising her from her seat, she ran back to the cottage, whilst he with one violent spring reached the summit of the mound, and the next moment had descended to the other side.

Emma could never recollect how she got back to the cottage ; one thing only she remembered, that about half way between that and the mound she met a labouring man, and that she had presence of mind to tell him where Albert was, and to beg him to hasten to his assistance. Anna was sitting at her spinning wheel when Emma burst into the cottage, and, almost fainting from her violent efforts, ran up to her mother, and placed the cold, pale child in her arms. "Oh, mother, mother," she exclaimed, "she is dead, she does not breathe. Oh what shall we do ? and Stephen too is dead ; Albert cannot bring him here without help ; you must go immediately."

Wilhelm's wife, though dreadfully shocked, did not wait to ask any questions, but directing Emma to warm a blanket, she stripped the cold and wet clothes from the child, and had the pleasure to find that there was some little warmth about her heart.

"She is not quite dead, Emma," said she, "but you must not bring her to the fire ;" so saying, she laid her on a bed in Albert's little room, and, having directed Emma to rub her with all her strength, whilst little George was to warm his flannel petti-

coat and woollen coat, and place it on her stomach, she ran out to help Albert.

And now we may imagine we see poor little Margot stretched on a bed, and the trembling Emma rubbing her cold limbs, whilst little George busied himself in warming the clothes which they laid over her stomach. For some moments, however, the child gave no signs of life ; but at length she heaved a kind of faint sigh, and opened her mouth with a sort of gasping motion ; on which Emma burst into a violent fit of sobbing, but continued her endeavours, till something like the warmth of life was restored to her limbs. Her eyes still, however, remained closed, and her breathing was hardly perceived, when she heard her mother's voice, with that of Albert and the labouring man, who assisted to bring in poor Stephen.

The poor boy was laid on the bed, having been stripped of the few wet rags with which he was hardly covered, and the same means used with him as with his sister, whom Anna had now taken into her bosom. It was soon to be perceived that Margot was likely to recover, for after a while a fine glow spread itself over her body, and after many gaspings and deep sighs she began to breathe freely ; and after a while she opened her eyes, and was able to swallow a little warm milk, though she seemed to know no one about her.

But poor Stephen remained long insensible, cold, and still, though it was found, when a feather was held to his nostrils, that he had not quite ceased to breathe. The labouring man, however, who had helped to bring him in, having rubbed him for a long time with snow, and a small quantity of spirits being put into his mouth, he at length gave some signs of returning life ; but it was not till evening that he

seemed to breathe freely, or that any one dared to hope that he would recover ; still, however, he seemed not to know any thing that was passing, and although he opened his eyes, he did not take any notice.

When Wilhelm returned from his work, and Anna heard his step in the porch, she ran out to prepare him for what had happened, to tell him what he must expect to see.

The tears started in the poor man's eyes as she spoke. "Well," he said, "please God, these little ones may recover, and that these lost ones may be *found indeed!*" (by which he meant found of him whom they never sought;) "and then we shall have no reason to lament this day's work." And thus speaking he stepped over the door sill, and the first object he beheld was Emma sitting in the chimney-corner with Margot on her knee.

"Well, my little one," said the good man, "so you have found a home at last." Margot lifted her languid head from Emma's shoulder, and said, "*father, are you come back again?*" "Who do you take me for, little one?" asked Wilhelm. The child did not answer his question, but added, "mother is dead ; they put her in the ground, and they have taken away poor Stephen." "No," said Wilhelm, "no, Stephen is not gone ;" and taking the child in his arms, wrapped as she was in a blanket, he carried her into the little room where Stephen lay, and where Albert and the poor labourer were still watching by him.

As soon as Margot saw her brother, she uttered such a cry of joy, as made the whole cottage ring, and had nearly sprung from the arms of Wilhelm on her brother's bed. At the sound of her voice Stephen opened his eyes, stretched out his feeble

arms, and burst into tears. From that time he seemed to feel great relief, and was able to be moved from his bed whilst it was warmed and dried : after which he was put into it again, and having been refreshed with some warm milk, and his little sister laid by him, the poor little beggars soon fell into a deep sleep ; whilst Wilhelm and family, who had eaten little that day, sat down to a comfortable supper, to which they invited the kind labourer, who had lost a day's work in order to assist the unfortunate little wanderers ; but who, as he often was heard to say, never missed that day's work, but found the benefit of it in a thousand blessings which were afterwards shed upon him ; for it was in Wilhelm's house, and during the family worship which took place after supper, that he first felt the power and the importance of true religion, and was made to know that man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Before Wilhelm and his wife went to bed, they visited the bed of the little wanderers, and found them sweetly sleeping in each other's arms, whilst a gentle glow had spread itself over their whole bodies.

In the morning Stephen was able to give some account of himself. It appears that his mother had pursued her wicked habits of begging, stealing, and other evil practices, till her character becoming notorious in every place where she resorted, she was actually reduced to such need that, having laid a long time in a lingering state, supported by what her little children could earn by begging, she at length expired under a shed in a farmer's yard, and was put into the ground with little ceremony ; the words of scripture, which were spoken of a wicked

king of Isra^c
case : Jere^r

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THE CHILD OF POVERTY

LORD, I am poor, yet hear my call ;
Afford me daily bread ;
Give me at least the crumbs that fall
From tables richly spread.

Thou canst for all my wants provide,
And bless my homely crust :
The ravens cry, and are supply'd,
And ought not I to trust ?

Behold the lilies, how they grow,
Though they can nothing do ;
And will not God, who clothes them so.
Afford me raiment too ?

But seeing, LORD, thou dost withhold
The riches some possess,
Grant me what better is than gold—
Thy grace and righteousness.

O may I heavenly treasures find,
And choose the better part :
Give me an humble, pious mind,
A meek and lowly heart.

Forgive my sins, my follies cure,
And grant the grace I need ;
And then, though I am mean and poor,
I shall be rich indeed.

LOVING OUR NEIGHBOURS AS OURSELVES.

WILLIAM CLARKE was the son of a poor weaver, who was a good man himself, and took great pains to teach his children to be good, by teaching them to read the Bible and their catechisms and other good books, and taking them to church to worship God, and hear his holy word, and by sending them to the Sunday school, that they might learn to understand what they read and what they heard at church.

One day as William's father was at work in his loom, his mother was getting their dinner ready, and his elder sister was helping her. Mrs. Clarke had just given a bowl of supawn to little Sally, who was very hungry, and began to eat it directly ; although she was not so selfish as not to be willing now and then to give a little to her pussy.

Little William, then just seven years old, came running in quite out of breath,—“ Oh, mother,” said he, “ do come and see poor neighbour Blake, she is very ill, and they have nothing to eat. Tommy Blake asked me to let him play at ball with me, for he said he had no breakfast, and it would make him forget he was hungry. I thought he had been naughty, and asked him what he had been doing ; but he said his mother was too sick to be able to go to the squire's to work yesterday ; so there was no bread left, and they had not eaten since yesterday dinner-time. So, mother, I told him that if he would come home with me, I was sure you would give him some of our dinner to take to his mother, for he loves her very dearly. But he said, his mother told him this morning not to come to our house, for you had sent them things several times, and they

ought not to trouble you so often. So when I found he would not come, I thought I would run directly and tell you ; for I just peeped in at the door, and I saw Mrs. Blake, and she looks so ill, you cannot think, and I am sure they would help us : and my text that I had to learn in the gospel for last Sunday was, ‘ Love thy neighbour as thyself,’ and I know I should not like to go without my breakfast, and have no dinner too.” Poor William then burst into tears ; but, recollecting himself, he took the corner of his pinafore and began to wipe his eyes.

“ Well,” said Mrs. Clarke, “ don’t cry, Willy ; as soon as we have had our dinners we will go and take some to poor widow Blake, and see what we can do for her.” So saying, she made haste to get all ready as fast as she could.

Little Sally had listened very attentively ; she got up, and while her mother was very busy, she said, “ Willy, dear, see, here’s almost all my supawn left ; come, let’s go and take it to Tommy, for he had no breakfast, and he’s too hungry to wait till we’ve done dinner.” The mother, pleased to hear this, did not stop them, and off went William and Sally with the supawn, and begged Tommy to eat it for breakfast, telling him mother would come by and by, and bring them some dinner.

My dear children, do you learn texts from the Bible, or the scripture proofs in your Sunday school books ? Remember, it is written, “ Be ye *doers* of the word, and not hearers only ;” and also remember that text in the epistle, “ As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men.” (Gal. vi. 10.) And we are to do this to show our love to Christ, remembering his love in all that he has done and suffered for poor sinners, that they might be brought near to God.







